

suspended.¹ Learned as he was himself, he affected to depreciate earthly learning. But while such extravagances detract somewhat from his greatness, as they certainly detracted from his usefulness, they cannot be held, as his enemies hold them, to be the principal part of his legacy to mankind. True genius nearly always pays the price of originality and inventive power, in mistakes proportionately great,

In his political ideas regarding the Church, Wycliffe was one of a school. Continental and English writers had already for a century been theorising against the secular power of ecclesiastics. The Papal Bull of 1377 had likened Wycliffe's early heresies to the * perverse opinions and unlearned learning of Marsiglio of Padua of damned memory/² who had demanded that the Church should be confined to her spiritual province, and had attacked the * Csesarean clergy.' Wycliffe himself recognised Occam as his master,³ for his great fellow-countryman had more than fifty years back declared it the duty of priests to live in poverty, and had maintained with his pen the power of the secular State against the Pope. It was by the Spiritual Franciscans, 'those evangelical men,' as Wycliffe called them, * very dear to God,' that the poverty ordered by the Gospel had been chiefly practised and preached as an example for the whole Church. On the other hand, it was to their enemy FitzEalph, Bishop of Armagh, that he owed his doctrine of * Dominion.⁴ Grossetete, the reforming Bishop of Lincoln, had in his day attacked pluralities and opposed the abuses of Papal power in England. Wycliffe not only spoke of him with respect and admiration, but again and again quoted his words and advanced his opinions as authoritative.⁵ But while these predecessors had dealt with one or two points only, Wycliffe dealt with religion as a whole. Besides the political proposals of Occam and Marsiglio, he sketched out a new religion which included their proposed changes as part

¹ *S. E. W.*, i. 310.

² *Fasc. Z.*, 243.

³ * Inceptor,' *De Veritate Sancta Scriptures*, cap. xiv., in

Lechler, ii. 372.

⁴ See Matt., pp. zxxiii-iv; Brown's *Fasciculus*, i. 237; Mr. Poole in *Social England*, ii. 163.

⁵ *De Civili Dominio*, 385-94; *De Officio Regis*, 85; *S. E. W.*, iii. 469, 489 f *Opus Evangelicum*, i. 17.